United Nations A/66/818–S/2012/377

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
31 May 2012

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-sixth session
Agenda items 35, 39, 67 and 83

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance

The rule of law at the national and international levels

Letter dated 29 May 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 35, 39, 67 and 83, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Garen **Nazarian**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 29 May 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The date of 9 May is a triple holiday for the people of Nagorno Karabakh Republic (Republic of Artsakh). On that day, the people of Artsakh, along with other nations, celebrate national unity, solidarity and freedom brought by the end of the Second World War.

Though small in numbers, the Armenians of Artsakh had a significant role in the victory over fascism. The history of the Second World War holds sacred the names of three marshals, one admiral, 24 generals, 28 heroes of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, seven servicemen awarded as Cavaliers of the Order of Glory and many high-ranking officers born in Artsakh.

On 9 May, the people of Artsakh also celebrate the anniversary of the liberation of Shushi.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Shushi was shaped and developed as one of the cultural and spiritual centres for Armenians. However, in the beginning of the twentieth century, the town was destroyed and set on fire by the armed units of Azerbaijan, which in the aforementioned time had for the first time in history appeared on the world map as a state. In the late 1980s, the last Armenian families left Shushi, in order not to share the same fate as the Armenians massacred in Sumgait and other towns in Azerbaijan.

In the early 1990s, Shushi, which is located on the heights neighbouring Stepanakert, the capital of Artsakh, became a strong hold of the aggression of Azerbaijan, and particularly one of Azerbaijan's main military positions established for shelling Stepanakert.

Stepanakert became the target of 300 to 400 missiles launched daily from Shushi, which forced the population of the town to seek shelter underground, caused hundreds of casualties and deaths and left half of the town in ruins.

The attitude of Azerbaijan towards the Armenian population of Shushi and the Armenian heritage of the town is best illustrated by the fact that the centuries-old Saint Ghazanchetsots Cathedral was turned by the Azerbaijani forces into a warehouse for missiles fired at the Armenian population.

The people of Artsakh, besieged by the Azeri forces, were on the brink of extermination. At that fateful moment, after a military action undertaken by the forces of self-defence of Artsakh, on 9 May 1992 the Azerbaijani forces left the town. With the following steps, the people of Artsakh established a land corridor linking with Armenia, which became known as the "Road of Life".

The date of 9 May is also the day when the Nagorno Karabakh Republic celebrates the anniversary of the establishment of the Defence Army of Nagorno Karabakh Republic, which signifies the will of the people to defend their honour, security and freedom. For that very reason, every year on that day, the people of Artsakh urge to learn the lessons of the past and stay true to the principles of peaceful coexistence and non-violent resolution of conflicts in the world.

The concerns and complaints of Azerbaijan regarding the military parade dedicated to the Victory Day in Nagorno Karabakh Republic are preposterous:

Azerbaijan responded to the realization of the will of the people of Nagorno Karabakh to self-determination with ethnic cleansings in the territories surrounding Nagorno Karabakh and in Karabakh proper. Azerbaijan unleashed a wide-scale military aggression against the people of Artsakh, involving thousands of mercenaries closely linked to notorious international terrorist networks. As a result of the military aggression of Azerbaijan against the Nagorno Karabakh Republic, which fulfilled its right to self-determination, some territories of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic still remain under the occupation of Azerbaijan. Moreover, provocation and acts of subversion by Azerbaijan on the Azerbaijan-Karabakh line of contact are taking place almost daily.

Meanwhile, official Baku is continuously issuing belligerent statements with direct threats addressed to the people of Nagorno Karabakh, "forgetting" about the 1994 ceasefire agreement signed by the representatives of Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan.

Only during the past seven years, Azerbaijan has increased its military spending 20 times, violating along the way all acceptable limits stipulated by the international armament treaties. Hence, the Azerbaijani authorities are solely responsible for the militarization of the region; their militaristic policies are threatening the stability in the region.

The extremely racist propaganda and undisguised war threats of Azerbaijan are unacceptable and the people of Artsakh are resolute in further strengthening their independent statehood based on democratic values.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic states that the Republic of Azerbaijan is responsible for turning its initially taken power-based stance towards the Nagorno Karabakh Republic issue into a military conflict and, by continuing this policy, Azerbaijan has undermined the peaceful settlement of the Azerbaijan-Karabakh conflict.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Nagorno Karabakh Republic calls upon the international community to react adequately to the behaviour of Azerbaijan, which is in blatant violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the Helsinki Final Act, in order to avert another possible adventure by Azerbaijan endangering the stability in the region.